

March 12, 2013

Mayor Bob Cashell and City Council Members, City of Reno

RE: Agenda March 13, 2013

Item J.5 Update, discussion and potential direction to staff regarding the Curb Parking System (parking kiosks). (For Possible Action)

Dear Mayor Cashell and Council Members,

As the owner of the Wild River Grille, I would like to comment about the current parking Kiosk system in Downtown. To summarize, the new system has proven to be extremely flawed and difficult for visitors to use, and has caused harm to the businesses downtown. Some specific comments are as follows:

1. Much of the time the kiosks do not work properly which confuses visitors. We receive comments every day from guests complaining about the system or saying that it wouldn't take their money and "are we going to get a ticket?"
2. Even when the kiosks themselves work properly (which is rare) it is not apparent from most locations what you are supposed to do or where you are supposed to go. We get asked about it by frustrated customers every day.
3. Customers also complain that the kiosks won't take bills only coins? And they often report that it wouldn't take their credit card.
4. On a daily basis, you can watch people park, get out of their cars and go through the confusion and frustration of trying to figure out what to do.

As a result, fewer and fewer visitors are parking downtown because of the difficulty of the parking. On a given weekday, there are far fewer cars parked in the pay spots then when there were the simple coin meters at every spot. At least those one could understand. They were functional and straight forward. The new system has proven to be a deterrent to visitors coming downtown. There is also a direct correlation to business losses during the mid week days which can be corroborated by many downtown businesses.

I would like to respectfully suggest that the City consider a brand new approach to the parking issue downtown. On many occasions, city leaders have stated that they are trying to foster a clean and safe environment downtown that will attract more visitors and desirable businesses. Many of us entrepreneurs have believed in that vision and have invested in downtown. Why would we want to have more obstacles to commerce and economic growth downtown? The kiosk system has proven to be a huge obstacle and has been harmful to business. I believe the city should consider a program that will make parking free for 2 hours in the downtown redevelopment areas. If properly enforced, a very strong case can be made that this would actually increase revenues to the city. It would be a boon to business, generate enormous positive PR, and arguably it would generate more revenue for the city. Growth in tax and license revenue combined with enforcement revenue would certainly exceed what little revenue that is being generated now by the broken kiosk system.

On this issue, I have allowed for enough time to be objective, and have consulted with many of my business colleagues downtown. I can tell you that the sentiment from not just myself, is overwhelming disappointment and rejection of the current kiosk system. The merchants of the RWMA and many

other downtown property and business owners feel the same way and will write and comment if needed.

My investment in the Wild River Grille has been very well received by the community and has been well aligned with the city's vision for urban renewal. It has helped to transform the spot, which is at the absolute heart of the city, into a true asset for downtown and a major generator of revenues to the city. It is my goal to provide a desirable hospitality experience in this location for many years to come. I hope that the city leaders will seriously consider these comments. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Chuck Shapiro
President and Owner, Wild River Grille